

Army Spy Shakeup Ordered

Laird Tightens Civilian Control Of Intelligence

By Michael Getler
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A major shakeup of military intelligence operations to bring them under tighter civilian control and make sure they are "completely consistent with constitutional rights" was ordered yesterday by Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird.

Laird set in motion a top-level civilian review of existing Pentagon policies covering investigative and counter-intelligence activities, and directed that a report be made no later than Feb. 1 "to inform the American public . . . and the Congress . . . about the changes being made from past procedures.

The Defense Secretary also put a Feb. 1 deadline on a major shift in the intelligence chain of command by ordering the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency to report directly to the Secretary of Defense rather than going through the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as is now the case.

The Joint Chiefs were also ordered not to set up a replacement intelligence organization of their own.

Laird's policy statement—issued to the civilian service secretaries, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs and defense agency directors—comes on the heels of steadily widening charges against the Army for unauthorized spying on individual civilians and non-military organizations.

Assistant Secretary of Defense Daniel Z. Henkin denied yesterday that the Laird directive was a "direct result" of the recent claims leveled through the office of Sen. Sam

J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.) of alleged Army snooping on hundreds of Illinois civilians and three prominent politicians.

Other Defense officials say privately that there is "no question that the recent charges played a part" in yesterday's announcement.

The officials stress, however, that Laird's interest in "gaining better control over the gray areas" of military intelligence dates back to his days in Congress and to one of his first moves since coming to the Pentagon—appointment of a special civilian assistant in 1969 to review intelligence procedures.

Officials also said privately that there was more to the new directive than high-level concern over military spying. Laird, these officials say, is still deeply concerned over congressional criticism of Defense intelligence foul-ups encountered when the U.S.S. Pueblo was captured, the U.S.S. Liberty shot up by Israeli warplanes, and a U.S. EC-121 radar plane was shot down by North Korean MIGs.

Officials claimed the new moves have nothing to do with alleged intelligence breakdowns in the Cambodian invasion last spring, over the Suez Canal last summer or in the abortive POW raid in Son-tay last month.

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Some Defense officials also believe Laird will soon create a new top-level Pentagon job—assistant secretary of defense for intelligence—which will put a civilian, other than the Secretary of Defense, in direct control of all intelligence work done by the armed forces and the Defense Intelligence Agency.

The director of the Defense Intelligence Agency has always been a military man, the current head being Lt. Gen. Donald V. Bennett.

In his statement yesterday, Laird said, "I want to be certain that Department of Defense intelligence and counter-intelligence activities are completely consistent with constitutional rights, all other legal provisions and national security needs. These activities must be conducted in a manner which recognizes and preserves individual human rights."

The Defense chief cited "particular concern over use of investigative and counter-intelligence personnel."

Laird said, "Actions have been taken to eliminate some past abuses . . . but further corrective actions are necessary as a matter of urgent priority."

Officials said that among the past actions Laird was referring to was an order issued June 9 to the Army to destroy all unauthorized files kept on civilians. That directive also set up new military snooping guidelines which limits the services generally to such things as checking

security clearances, investigating military or civilian defense employees and protecting military bases and classified material.

The June 9 directive does, however, describe some situations in which private installations or civilian activities could be monitored.

"Because of the understandable public interest in this matter," Laird said, his special assistant for intelligence, Robert F. Froehlke, would make a public report on the Pentagon review and proposed changes no later than Feb. 1.

Froehlke is currently assistant secretary of defense for administration.

Just prior to Laird's statement yesterday, nine New York congressmen urged the Defense chief to check personally into reports of Army spying on civilians. They also asked for copies of any dossiers that had been kept on them. A similar request was made yesterday by New York Republican Sen. Jacob K. Javits.